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PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

May 28, 1998

Ms. Lori MacWilliams
55 Brompton Court
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Dear Ms. MacWilliams:

Thank you for contacting me with your thoughts on current legislative proposals to create the first comprehensive national tobacco policy and to combat the rising trend of teenage smoking in the United States. I appreciate you taking the time to share your views with me on this very important issue.

As you may recall, In the spring of 1997, four of the largest tobacco giants negotiated for three months and hammered out what appeared to be an historic negotiated settlement with the Attorneys General of 40 states. The deal would settle 40 state lawsuits and transform the way tobacco products are regulated, manufactured, marketed and sold in the United States. The settlement, however, offered the tobacco industry substantial immunity from lawsuits -- a provision that later become a major point of contention between the industry and Congress.

The proposed resolution became a framework for Congress as it began debating its own resolution to the tobacco problem and started its efforts to create the first comprehensive national tobacco policy. A number of bills have been introduced over the last year in both the House and the Senate. Each one approaches the many complex issues of a national tobacco policy differently. These issues include the following:

- Full authority for the FDA to regulate tobacco producers;
- No extension of immunity to the tobacco industry for future law suites;
- Tough penalties on the tobacco industry if youth smoking does not decline;
- Prohibit tobacco marketing and advertising targeted at kids;
- Broad disclosure of tobacco industry documents;
- Protection from second hand smoke in public places and work sites;
- Public education campaigns to discourage new smokers, particularly among youth;

While I have not yet chosen a piece of tobacco legislation to endorse, it is my sincere hope that comprehensive tobacco legislation will be passed before the end of the 105th Congress. There is still much work to be done. Please know that I will keep your thoughts in mind as I continue to work with my colleagues on this vital issue.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tim Holden

TIM HOLDEN
Member of Congress

51861 4912

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